



The Center on
Conscience & War

The Reporter for Conscience' Sake

Volume 65

Winter 2008

Number 4

CCW Ends 2008 with New Dedication!



Andrew Gorby talks with viewers about the work of CCW after a screening of "Soldiers of Conscience."

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CCW Travels to Columbus, GA, for the Annual Vigil to Close the School of the Americas

The Center on Conscience & War once again had a presence at the Annual Vigil to Close the School of the Americas at the main gate of Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, on November 22 and 23.

The CCW staff who attended the event—Andrew Gorby, Bill Galvin, and Thomas Bergman—began the first big day of the occasion at the gathering of members of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship for breakfast at the Holiday Inn-

Airport North in Columbus. During the Saturday morning breakfast, Galvin spoke about CCW and promoted CCW's screening of "Soldiers of Conscience" that night.

This time, however, CCW did not staff a table at the event. The staff of the Center instead chose to give participants postcards with information about CCW along with information advertising

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Founded in 1940, the Center on Conscience & War works to extend and defend the rights of conscientious objectors to war. In pursuit of this calling, the Center provides these services free of charge:

- Counsel military conscientious objectors.
- Provide legal support for military personnel.
- Lobby Congress to extend and defend the rights of conscientious objectors.
- Provide accurate information to the public on Selective Service registration.
- Provide support to COs who refuse to register for the draft through F.E.A.T student loans.
- Counsel soldiers on the GI Rights Hotline with accuracy and honesty.
- Military counter-recruitment information
- Provide workshops, training, and speakers on any of the above topics.

News Briefs

Study: Parents' Deployments Make Kids More Aggressive

Preschoolers with a parent away at war were more likely to show aggression than other young children in military families, according to the first published research on how the very young react to wartime deployment.

Hitting, biting and hyperactivity—"the behaviors parents really notice"—were more frequent when a parent was deployed, said lead author Dr. Molinda Chartrand, an active duty pediatrician in the U.S. Air Force.

The study, which was small and included fewer than 200 children, adds to previous evidence of the stress that deployment puts on families. Last year, a study of almost 1,800 Army families worldwide found that reports of child abuse and neglect were 42 percent higher during times when the soldier-parent was deployed.

(Associated Press, November 3, 2008)

Daughter of Deputy Mossad Chief Imprisoned for Beliefs

Omer Goldman, daughter of the former deputy head of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, sits in an Israeli military prison for refusing induction into the Israel Defense Forces.

Goldman, without her father's permission, visited a Palestinian town in the West Bank and at a check-point, alongside Palestinians, was fired upon by Israeli soldiers. Goldman said: "We were sitting by the roadside talking and soldiers came along and after a few seconds they received an order and fired gas grenades and rubber bullets at us. Then it struck me, to my astonishment, that the soldiers were following an order without thinking. For the first time in my life, an Israeli soldier raised his weapon and fired at me."

Although, not surprisingly, her father does not support her decision to refuse, he still supports her as a daughter. "He and I have very similar characters. I, too, fight to the end for what I believe in. But we are opposites ideologically."

Goldman is part of a new movement of Israeli conscientious objectors, called the Shministim,

who are currently resisting military service and the occupation of Palestinian territory.

(December 18th.org)

Turkish Party Proposes Bill Extending Rights to COs

Turkey's Democratic Society Party, or DTP, has prepared a parliamentary bill to allow conscientious objectors to be exempt from military service and participate in public service instead.

Akın Birdal, Şırnak Deputy of the DTP, alongside other DTP deputies Hasip Kaplan and Bengi Yıldız, organized a press conference at Parliament explaining the bill, which has been signed by 21 DTP deputies.

Birdal said wherever the right to live was uncertain, other rights and freedoms were impossible to protect. "All around the world, people who find killing and dying a contradiction to their own values tend to reject war and mandatory military service, which is practice for war," said Birdal.

(HurriyetDailyNews.com, November 14, 2008)

Army to Probe Suicides among Recruiters

The Army has agreed to investigate a disproportionate cluster of suicides among recruiters in an East Texas battalion—news that a local Army widow said she was relieved to hear.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren said the investigation also will focus on allegations from other soldiers and family members that they were pressured to cover up serious problems in the battalion.

The investigation was sought by U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who heard from soldiers and family members after the *Houston Chronicle* reported the cluster of suicides earlier this year.

Cornyn told The Associated Press on Friday that he's concerned about the Houston battalion, but noted "it also has implications militarywide."

(Longview News-Journal, November 8, 2008)

Intern Tia Howard Leaves CCW

Tia Howard joined CCW as an intern during the Fall 2008 semester at American University, where she is majoring in International Studies. Howard switches to a full-time schedule at American in the spring.

I first started interning at the Center on Conscience and War on September 10, 2008. I was scared, sweaty, and extremely awkward. By my second day at CCW, I had successfully caused 2 copy jams and a printer malfunction, but I managed to crank out 500 pamphlets against war. By the end of my second month here I had successfully been kicked out of a House of Representatives Office Building. My hardest task by far, that I have

yet to fully master, would be counseling the soldiers who call the GI Rights hotline. It has been my honor to speak with the people who risk their lives for our country. I may not have known them personally, or even known their names, but I felt connected to them. With the flick of a pen or the shaking of a hand, our

world can change into a place we had never anticipated it would be, yet I am happy to know that I tried to make it better. I made a difference in someone's life. I have enjoyed my time here and the people that I have worked with. I have to say that I will miss our politically charged discussions about issues we care about. I would like to thank J.E. McNeil for this opportunity and everyone at CCW for all that they have done for me. I hope to work with you all again in the future!



Taj Johnson Joins CCW Board

Thomas 'Taj' Johnson is Director of SkyValley Tai Ji, VisionQuest Travel and JB Productions, LLC. He also currently serves as the Program Chair for the MLK Jr. Commemoration Committee of Bowie, Inc. In that latter capacity, he strives within that organization to bring fresh perspective and relevancy to the committee's goals of celebrating diversity and promoting the entirety of Dr. Martin Luther King's message and his concept of 'The Beloved Community'. Taj's work with Sky Valley Tai Ji within the Washington DC area and VisionQuest Travel in Negril, Jamaica provides an opportunity for participants to experience Ignatian Spirituality as practiced within Chinese Neijia (Internal Art Studies) and Traditional African Culture; objectively cultivate harmony within 5 major areas of human consciousness: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Energetic and Spiritual.

An outgrowth of his foundational work with Dr. Nianzu and Peggy Li, Dr. Lee Guo Tin and his advancing Taoist work with Wudang Master Xiao Ling Liu; Taj has integrated these Eastern Traditions with the hermeneutic tradition as practiced both within his Afri/Caribbean lineage and Chinese Neijia. In addition to his formal study of Economics, Physics and Music (BA 1981) at the University of Vermont; his postgraduate work includes Comparative Religious Studies with Dr. Yosef ben-Jochanan, Political History with Professor John Henrik Clarke, Trends in Cultural Development with Runoko Rashidi and Wayne Chandler and Melanin research with Carol Barnes.

While nurturing deep roots within the greater meditative community, Taj is an advocate of using meditation sessions to focus the mind, fine-tune energies in preparation for dynamic and effective actions; nurturing respect of nature and others as a world community while focusing on the vastness of nature and spiritual/cultural diversity.

As a Healer and Unifier, Taj seeks to dialog within communities that historically maintain what W.E.B. DuBois identified as "double consciousness" with regard to American patriotism; to hopefully move closer to the realization of "The Beloved Community" of Josiah Royce and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Taj lives in Prince George's County Maryland with his wife of 16 years, Jeannie and their cat, Ariel.



“Spreading the word...”

National Service: A Surprising New Direction for Our Tomorrow

“If we are going into war, then all of us go, not just some.”
—President-Elect Barack Obama, 13 September 2008, National Service Forum at Columbia University.

“It’s time for a real Patriot Act that brings out the patriot in all of us. We propose universal civilian service for every young American. Under this plan, All Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five will be asked to serve their country by going through three months of basic training, civil defense preparation and community service...”

Here’s how it would work. Young people will know that between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, the nation will enlist them for three months of civilian service. They’ll be asked to report for three months of basic civil defense training in their state or community, where they will learn what to do in the event of biochemical, nuclear or conventional attack; how to assist others in an evacuation; how to respond when a levee breaks or we’re hit by a natural disaster. These young people will be available to address their communities’ most pressing needs.”

—Rahm Emanuel, future Chief of Staff to Barack Obama, co-author of *The Plan*, pages 61-62, 2006.

The intentions of the new administration are clear: Change is coming.

There is already a call for an increase of 90,000 servicemembers and always there hovers the possibility of a draft. In this historic time, the Center on Conscience & War is asking our supporters to remain vigilant and active in the pursuit of peace.

On 13 September 2008 at the National Service Forum at Columbia University president-elect Barack Obama, while speaking about the unequal burden of military service being placed on young men and women from small towns, spoke the following words, “And I think it’s important for the President to say, this is an important obligation. If we are going into war, then all of us go, not just some.”

In his election night acceptance speech, Obama again raised the issue of service; “So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism; of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other.”

CCW, as one of the oldest draft counseling organizations in the nation, which has monitored draft issues for decades, believes that Obama’s language is an attempt to test the American public’s willingness to support a draft or mandatory national service. The plan of Rahm Emanuel is strikingly clear.

We cannot afford to watch and wait in hope. We need to act now to prevent a draft or mandatory service from being forced upon our young people.

The intentions of the new administration are clear. We need to act by engaging our friends, family, neighbors, and Congressional members by informing them about the myths and facts about the draft and universal service. We need to let President-Elect Obama know that this nation will no longer supply the bodies that are required for war.

Myths and Facts About the Draft

Myth: In terms of economic status and race, there would be greater diversity.

Fact: No draft will ever be fair. A draft always has exemptions and the people with knowledge and comprehension of these exemptions will be much more likely to successfully apply.

Myth: A draft would be fair if we limit exemptions to only those medically unfit and conscientious objectors to war.

Fact: A person who has medical records since before they were born will be more likely to be declared medically unfit than a person who grew up going to an emergency room, free clinic, or perhaps had no doctor. A study reported in the *Washington Post* in 2004 in which all factors other than race were accounted for showed that African-Americans are sicker than Anglos. During the Vietnam War, however, a higher percentage of Anglos received a medical exemption than African-Americans.

In reality, a draft board will often misinterpret a claim of conscientious objection as insincere if the applicant lacks writing and oral presentation skills which are often gained through being afforded a solid education.

Myth: A draft will help end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as stop an invasion of Iran and Pakistan.

Fact: A military draft was in place prior to both the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The easy accessibility of new personnel only fueled both wars. The military draft ended three years prior to the end of the Vietnam War, but the antiwar movement continued. The fact is that the newly and increasingly technologically based military does not need the same amount of people to invade—only to maintain territory after the invasion. The occupation of Iraq is a clear case in point.

Myth: Universal service will help instill patriotism in our young people and add to the strength of the military while providing an alternative for those opposed to the war.

Fact: Our country was founded on the principal of freedom to choose which includes

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“Supporting our community...”

CCW at SOA *(From front cover)*

the screening of the film “Soldiers of Conscience”—a film that was produced in consultation with CCW—during the weekend of events.

Approximately 100 people attended the the Saturday night screening of the film and discussion afterwards. The film, designed to have broad appeal and make viewers think about the serious nature of participation in war, was well-received by the viewers.

When Gorby was introduced, Galvin explained that 2 years ago, “when we were here for the SOA vigil, Andrew was a soldier training at Fort Benning” but that he was discharged the following spring as a conscientious objector. That received the strongest applause of the evening. Both Galvin and Gorby answered questions from the audience during the discussion after the film.

There were other special moments at this year’s vigil. Galvin felt privileged to walk with Camilo Mejia, a U.S. Army Staff Sergeant who fought in Iraq and was discharged as a conscientious objector, at the front of the procession to the gates on Sunday morning. And the entire group, having arrived mid-day on Friday, was put to work by Fr. Roy Bourgeois hauling tables and chairs needed for the weekend activities!

All in all, it was another powerful weekend.

CCW Tables at Brethren Conference

On October 10 and 11, Thomas Bergman—from the staff of the Center on Conscience & War and former volunteer with Brethren Volunteer Service—represented CCW in Frederick, Md., at the Mid-Atlantic District Conference of the Church of the Brethren.

While at the event, Bergman staffed a table displaying CCW’s

current outreach materials, including the powerful documentary “Soldiers of Conscience.” He also talked with attendees of the conference about the issues of militarism that are affecting their communities and provided them with tools for discussing issues of conscience and alternatives to enlisting in the U.S. military.

Near the end of the conference, Bergman attended the Peace Committee of the Mid-Atlantic District and observed discussion of current campaigns to get young Brethren involved with peace issues.



Bill Galvin engages viewers with the work of CCW after the screening of the film.

“I enjoyed talking with people that attended the conference,” said Bergman. “It was great to find out how others are campaigning to educate our country on issues that are involved in war and peace.”

(From Page 4)

the freedom to vote and the freedom to serve. Patriotism cannot be forced. Universal service is unlikely to give a truly equal choice between civilian work and military work. Military service has always provided better benefits and thereby put a thumb on the scale. Take a closer look at the military, AmeriCorps, and the Peace Corps and examine the benefits of each.

“Extending the rights of conscience...”

CCW Staff Visit Selective Service

On November 13, the staff of the Center on Conscience & War went to the office of the Selective Service System in order to discuss draft board hearing issues that may impact on the rights of conscientious objectors. CCW staff reviewed a series of film clips showing not-so-hypothetical draft board hearings. These clips are shown to people training to be on draft boards.

The Selective Service System was created in 1940. It was part of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which created America's first peace time draft. Every male, at age 18, must register with the Selective Service System. Currently, Selective Service is not authorized to induct people into the military, and the U.S. military supports the current recruitment-based method of sustaining numbers of personnel.

him about his religious and moral upbringing. They asked his opinions on World War II and when the use of force might be justified. The Quaker responded to each question from the board and, if the appearance before the Board had been real, he would have been declared a conscientious objector and eligible for alternative service.

Another applicant appeared before the board with a counselor. The counselor was not allowed to address the board directly or interfere with the proceedings. He could only speak with his client. In this case, the applicant stumbled and ended agreeing that he would be willing to do non-combatant service. Since he applied to do alternative service, he would have been denied CO status. The Selective Service Board cannot substitute 1-A-O for 1-O and he would not be able to apply again for 1-A-O.

This was one of several issues raised in the viewing of the film



Pictured left to right: Andrew Gorby Tia Howard, Cassandra Costley, William Christian, J. E. McNeil, Bill Galvin, and Thomas Bergman. Costley and Christian are Selective Service staff.

Although CCW opposes all forms of conscription, its staff views its arm's-length relationship with Selective Service as an opportunity to advocate for the rights of conscientious objectors. CCW was pleased that it had this particular opportunity to attempt to advocate for fairer treatment of conscientious objectors at their potential draft board hearings.

There were three clips in the film. A young Quaker appeared before the board as a conscientious objector to war. He calmly and coolly explained to the board that he would not participate in war in any way. The board members fired off questions to

that CCW staff discussed with staff of the Selective Service. Inappropriate questions during the hearings were also discussed.

When the video finished playing in the board room, the staff of CCW gave their opinions of it overall. They thought that the video was well done. It was not scripted and seemed to be a real representation of what a hearing before the Selective Service board could be like in the event of a draft. But like a real draft board, mistakes were made.

“Letting the past inspire our conscience...”

CCW Trains Counselors on GI Rights Hotline in New York City

On November 15 and 16, CCW staffmember Bill Galvin traveled to New York City to conduct a training for new counselors on the GI Rights Hotline Network. The two-day training included topics like applying for discharges, including conscientious objection, as well as filing complaints against military commands.

The Center on Conscience & War, in consultation with other participants, rearranged the training to include a phone conference about counseling servicemembers who have gone AWOL or UA (approximately 40% of the calls to the GI Rights Hotline pertain to AWOL- or UA-related questions). The second day allowed trainees to review actual applications for conscientious objector status and discuss certain advice that can be given to conscientious objectors on how best to strengthen their claim and move forward in the discharge process. Galvin left New York confident that this group of new counselors “got it”! “They really understand the issues that were covered in the workshop and will be an asset to the GI Rights Hotline Network of counselors,” Galvin said.

Warren Hoover, Former Head of NISBCO, Dies

Warren Hoover died on Sept 4, 2008. Hoover served as the Executive Secretary of the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO)—the former title of the Center on Conscience & War—from July 1969 through September 1983. He led this organization through some tumultuous years at the peak of the Vietnam War, through lean years when there was no active draft and many of our supporters didn’t view our work with the same urgency, and through the resumption of draft registration and resistance in the early 1980s. The organization itself went through a transformation under his leadership from the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) into the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors.

The July 1969 issue of the Reporter stated: “Rev. Hoover experienced many of the frustrations and difficulties experienced by today’s conscientious objector in his attempts to be recognized as a CO during World War II.” Hoover was a minister in the Church of the Brethren and prior to coming to NISBCO served churches in Minnesota, Illinois, and Arizona. He had also worked with CROP (a project of Church World Service) and the Heifer Project.

Under his leadership NISBCO successfully challenged Selec-

tive Service’s plans for a new, more complex CO application form; for a universal national service to replace the traditional draft; plans for CO orientation centers which Hoover referred to as a “CO boot camp”; and an alternative service plan that Hoover characterized as “repressive,” an effort which resulted in a much more reasonable plan for alternative service.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Ruth L. Hoover; his children John R. , Donald J., Mary E., and Stephen W. ; his sister, Mildred Jordan; in addition to many nieces, nephews and cousins.



Warren Hoover at his desk during the mid-70s.



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From the Desk of the Executive Director

In the spring of 1979 two major events occurred in my life. I became a lawyer and I moved to Washington, DC.

I began to look for work as a lawyer immediately. My method was to get the name of a person at an organization, set up an appointment even if there was not a job opening, talk with them, and then ask for three names of people I could talk to. This process resulted in obtaining the name of Warren Hoover at the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors.

When I interviewed with Warren Hoover I was a lawyer, but not yet a Quaker. We had a long conversation and felt an immediate rapport. He told me he wanted to hire an attorney for NISBCO and he was especially excited about the prospect of the attorney being a woman (still a moderately unusual thing in those days). We agreed that I would come work for him provided his board would commit to the funding.

Alas, the board did not think there was enough money, so I did not get that job. But the connection remained and over the years and through the various Executive Directors I provided *pro bono* services until 1999 when there was a board that hired me as the Executive Director.

I am in awe of some of my predecessors in this position. I am in particular awe of Warren Hoover. He kept this organization going and prospering during some difficult times. The years after the Vietnam War and before the draft was reinstated were lean times for the Center, but he persevered and the Center

remained an organization to which people could turn when they needed support for stands of conscience. Even after he retired from the Center, he showed consistent support for our work in both his prayers and financially.

He will be missed.

The Center, as is most of the country, is facing difficult times again. Even as the financial crisis causes some to reduce their financial support for the Center, the need is growing as individuals consider the military as an answer to their own financial crisis. And for some that will work out. But for many others they will find the blinders struck from their eyes. In many cases, this revelation causes the servicemembers to be pulled in two directions. Which will they choose? Which can they choose? The fun and support and pride their family has for their "service"? Or their conscience which calls them to lay down their guns?

We will need to be there to help them find the way.

Yours for Peace and Justice,

J. E. McNeil

